explained. Even before conducting the public hearing, the Heads of Panchayats of the concerned area were specially invited to the Indira Gandhi Centre for Atomic Research, Kalpakkam and the details of the project and the benifit that will flow out of the project have been explained. Moreover as a part of the public awareness programme under emergency preparedness plan, about 1,000 people from the surrounding villages are brought inside the plant annually; they are provided orientation lectures on radiation related matters in the local language and taken around the plant to show the safety features of the reactor.

Joint Venture Atomic Power Plant

2587. SHRI K. M. SAIFULLAH: Will the Prime Minister be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government propose to set up atomic power plants in joint ventures with private companies;

(b) if so, the number of such plants to be set up; and

(c) by when the work on these plants is likely to commence?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ATOMIC ENERGY (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE) : (a) to (c) The government of India are open to specific offers for participation by private firms, Indian or foreign in the nuclear power sector. However, the Government have not received any concrete proposals from the private sector so for, for setting up of nuclear power plants in the country. Such offers, when received will have to be considered on the basis of technical suitability, economic viability, regulatory requirements of our country and the conditions attached to the offers.

SAFETY OF NUCLEAR ASSETS

2588. SHRI BHAGATRAM MANHAR :

SHRI RAJU PARMAR :

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have seen news-item captioned "Nuclear assets absolutely safe, says Kalam" appearing in the 'Times of India,' New Delhi dated the 13th November, 2001:

(b) if so, what is Government's reaction thereto; and

(c) whether Government's permission to make such sensitive statements was obtained by the Prinicipal Scientific Advisor and if not, the action taken in the matter?